

Members Present: Jo Lown, Chair, F. Robert Brown, Bill Linnane, Brigitte Casemyr, Judy Lucas, Ian Johnson, John E. Arnold, Kevin Cronin. Absent: Michael Meachen.

At 7:00 p.m. Ms. Lown called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Call to Order/Open Forum

There were no requests to address the Committee.

FY2011 Proposed Budgets

Buildings & Grounds; Selectmen, Central Purchasing, Animal Control, Street Lights, Weights & Measures

Maryanne Bilodeau, Assistant Town Manager, appeared before the Committee to present her budget request for FY11.

Building & Grounds – Initially this budget was cut by \$4,000, which included money for the repairs to the Forbes Community Building, the Senior Center, and the Hobby Building. The budget for electricity costs was also reduced, by about \$3,500, in the hope of future energy savings resulting from a recently completed energy audit. This budget covers the repair and maintenance of eight town buildings which were built between 1820 and 1984. Over half the budget goes towards utilities and materials—only 46% is actually used for maintenance. The department has tried to contain costs: new boilers were installed, windows sealed, fluorescent lights used, and an energy audit conducted. As none of their capital projects made it on the plan this year, it is very possible they will return to the Committee to request emergency funds. These buildings are old, and postponing repairs simply makes the eventual cost much higher. Currently repairs are needed on the tower, and on Memorial Hall—they will try to do some of these repairs within the current budget. The Committee commended Ms. Bilodeau for calling the Committee's attention to some needs earlier in the year, and noted that the consultant's review of town buildings may highlight some of these areas. Ms. Bilodeau would rather not have to make the 1.8% cut. She also would prefer to re-instate the electricity cuts—last year they had to come back for more funds due to increased delivery charges. The Committee discussed the possible savings in using the meeting rooms at the Forbes Building rather than Town Hall.

Selectmen's Budget—this was discussed with the Town Manager at a previous meeting.

Central Purchasing – The cut to this budget was taken from Repair and Maintenance of Vehicles, reducing it by \$1,746. This was originally a level-funded budget from the prior year. They would like the 1.8% cut back in their budget. Repairing existing town vehicles avoids having to buy newer vehicles. This budget is also used to help other departments that fall short—Building & Grounds, Assessors, Board of Health, Building Department, Animal Control, and Conservation. Ms. Bilodeau has used central purchasing to get discount rates on the copiers, paper and envelopes. This department will also be looked at under the consolidation study. The repair of vehicles is done by the DPW whenever possible. There was some discussion about the number of town vehicles used after business hours. The Fire Chief, the Police Chief, those on call with the DPW, and the DPW Manager, are among those who take a town vehicle home with them. Town policy states that town vehicles are not for personal use whatsoever.

Animal Control – The Dead Animals line has decreased—they have hired a 3rd party to do animal control on nights and weekends.

Street Lights – This budget has increased along with increases in electricity costs. The only way to reduce this budget is to reduce the amount of electricity used and buy energy-efficient bulbs. More electricity is used in the winter, as the days are shorter and lights are on more. A problem with the crosswalks in town some years ago resulted in increased wattage on some lights in town.

Weights & Measures – This department is required by statute. Technically the town is supposed to reimburse Bill Maltby for mileage and expenses. He hasn't applied for reimbursement, but the funds need to be there in case he does claim them.

Communications – This budget covers town cell phones, landlines and maintenance agreements for the town hall, the Forbes Municipal Building, cell phones for the Building Department, the Conservation Officer and Building & Grounds. The DPW, Fire and Police pay for their own. Animal control is paid for by the police department.

Insurance

Maryanne Bilodeau appeared before the Committee to present her budget request for FY11. The Committee commended Ms. Bilodeau for her hard work on the design plan. The Professional Services line includes deductibles and medical bills which must be paid. The Professional Liability line item is regularly exceeded—this year it's already over by \$6,300. Unemployment has been reduced to \$220,000. The Town is now responsible for paying out 50 weeks—if everyone went max, this budget would cover 6 ½ people for the entire 50 weeks. This is still less than the \$390,000 the Town would pay as a contributory employer. Medicare tax is level funded, being the 1.45% paid on everyone's wages, plus the Part B penalty. Life insurance was lowered by \$300. Group Insurance was at \$9.3 million—as of April 7th this has decreased to \$7.9 million. This is partly due to plan design, and partly to the negotiation of a 16-month rate (which saved over \$400,000). Open enrollment ended today, but Ms. Bilodeau will not have final numbers until the April 26th meeting. The Health Care Reimbursement account includes flexible spending for medical care reimbursement and dependent care. Surety/Bonds are needed by Treasurer/Collector, Ms. Bilodeau, Jim Malloy, Nancy Yendriga, and John Walden. In the past 5 years \$140,000 has been saved in the Fire Casualty Workers Comp. line by instituting certain programs, which has shown up in the premiums. This is not the final budget yet, just an estimate so far.

HR/Personnel Policies, Handbook, Bylaw

Maryanne Bilodeau appeared before the Committee to present this article. Jim Malloy and Ms. Bilodeau met with the Personnel Board last night to review Article 23. The Personnel Board will review the Handbook, and hold an open meeting in June for comments. If the article goes through at Town Meeting, it goes to the Attorney General's office for approval. When approved, the new Handbook would take effect. The Handbook consists of current personnel bylaws, plus information Jim Malloy had from Sturbridge. Town policies were then added: vehicle policy, drug testing, reporting of accidents, family medical leave, etc. This document is a draft of what the final handbook would look like. Jim Malloy will speak to the article/bylaw on April 26th. This handbook is mainly for town employees apart from the school department, though in the future town and school bylaws may well be combined. The Committee will read the draft and contact Ms. Bilodeau with any further questions. Kathy Wilfert, Personnel Board, noted that the Personnel Board vote was 4-0-1 in favor of what is now Article 24.

Personnel Board Budget

Kathy Wilfert, Personnel Board Chair, appeared before the Committee to present her budget request for FY11. The FY10 budget was \$58,726. This year's proposed budget, with the 1.8% cut, is \$52,033. They are comfortable with this budget, with two exceptions. Under wages & salaries, their Administrative Assistant will continue to do clerical work, and her hours won't be reduced even if the new bylaw passes. Secondly, expenses are fairly fixed. Training and Education is mostly contractually bound: if a class is

requested it must be paid for. They looked at what was requested vs. what was actually expended for the past few years, and were able to reduce requests by 75%. Ms. Wilfert noted that, with the new retirement proposal at the state level, the sick leave buyback is unknown. There is currently no request for retirement so there is no budget for it, but if this changes they will be coming back to ask for funds. They have budgeted \$1,280 for physicals for two new hires. Advertising of \$20 is for the posting of the public hearing before town meeting. Cash grants are fixed this year, and Wage Adjustments stay the same.

ATM Warrant Article – Personnel Bylaw

Personnel Board

Kathy Wilfert, Personnel Board Chair, Sue Abladian, and Tim Dodd appeared before the Committee to discuss Article 24. Ms. Wilfert explained that the Personnel Board met several times with the Town Manager in order to clarify its function. They felt the bylaw was antiquated and in need of revision. During these meetings the Board became concerned that certain functions, such as Education Reimbursement, Salary Schedule and Pay Classification, should remain under the oversight of the Personnel Board, while other things were better handled in other departments. Overall the Board feels these changes give more balance and relevance to their function. They will plan to meet monthly as necessary. If this article is approved, they will no longer have to go to Town Meeting to authorize the hiring of an attorney, or approve a new classification or position; if funding is involved, it becomes part of the budget, and does not require a separate vote at Town Meeting. Ms. Wilfert noted that this is good because it makes the town function more smoothly.

Mr. Dodd felt that this change provided more scrutiny by involving the Personnel Board, Town Manager, and the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Abladian noted the delay in hiring new personnel with the old system: the Personnel Board sending the job classification to be approved by the Board of Selectmen, then waiting for Town Meeting approval. Mr. Arnold pointed out the important difference between the whole town having a vote vs. 5 people on a board. Mr. Dodd felt the changes would give the Board more impact and relevance and foster a partnership with the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen. Formerly, the Personnel Board was primarily a vehicle for writing articles going to Town Meeting, rather than a viable part of the process. Ms. Wilfert stated that the Board had no issue with being appointed by the Town Manager, and had voted to support this article. The Committee pointed out that much of the understanding between the Board and Town Manager was implied, not explicitly laid out in the article. Ms. Abladian agreed that the wording could be refined.

Moderator – Bylaw comments

Joe Harrington, Town Moderator, appeared before the Committee to present this article. He welcomes these changes, feeling they're long overdue. He explained that the framework of the existing system was set in place 50 years ago, when three Selectmen ran the town and the Personnel Board ran the Personnel side of things. Since then many things have changed: the number of employees in unions, individual employment contracts, the Ethics Commission, etc. There are privacy requirements now which make working with this outdated bylaw a burden. Mr. Harrington believed there were sufficient safeguards to prevent improprieties with this new bylaw. He noted that it is a work in progress, will develop as time goes on, but is an improvement over what we've got. Regarding controls and safeguards, Mr. Harrington explained that the Personnel Board would have sole authority to originate things and bring them to the executive branch. The legislative branch still has a say in terms of budgeting.

Government Study II Committee

Sue Abladian, Personnel Board, Maryanne Bilodeau, Human Resources Director, Lynn Watts, Cultural Council, Tim Dodd, Selectman, and John Arnold, AFC member, appeared before the Committee to discuss this article. Ms. Abladian explained that the GSII Committee had met to consider two questions: first, is the Personnel Board still relevant? and second, could the work be better done by a HR department? They had concluded that at the least a trained HR person should be hired to assist. Mr.

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee minutes
April 15, 2010

Arnold informed the Committee that the GSII Committee had reviewed Article 24 and voted 5-0-1 to recommend the article not be put on the warrant. Although they agreed there needed to be a better way to administer the town's HR department, and that volunteers should not be in charge of this, they questioned the self-contained nature of the solution proposed—the Town Manager appoints the Personnel Board, then the Personnel Board makes recommendations which go through the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen. Policy bodies should have the closest affiliation with elected bodies. The results of the consolidation study would also give more insight into what should be done. Mr. Arnold felt that the issues should be worked through to find the best solution, not just the most convenient one. He recommended taking more time and getting this ready for the Fall Town Meeting.

Mr. Dodd added that the Board was agreed that something should be done regarding HR. Ms. Abladian noted the desire to get it right, and be careful not to create new problems. The wording would be very important. She had looked at other town models during this study. Most towns had done away with their Personnel Boards altogether; some kept them only to call up for special projects. In view of these findings, they had expected to be dissolved, or minimized. Instead, the article as it stands calls for more of their involvement. Mr. Dodd pointed out that some towns have Personnel Boards primarily in an advisory capacity, as part of the executive branch. He also explained that he had met with the School Department to discuss the possibility of merging some functions of Town and School HR. School HR is already streamlined, while the Town side is more dispersed. It could be argued that if Town HR became more streamlined, it would be easier to consolidate with two similar models.

Mr. Harrington closed the discussion by noting that it was a big change, but big change was needed, and that revisions could always be made later.

Approval of Minutes – Meeting No. 21, March 29, 2010

Mr. Johnson moved to accept the minutes of March 29, 2010, Meeting No. 21. The vote to approve the minutes was 8 in favor, with 8 being present.

Approval of Minutes – Meeting No. 22, April 1, 2010

Deferred to the next meeting.

ATM Warrant

Joe Harrington, Town Moderator, came before the Committee to present the ATM Warrant. Mr. Harrington will send his final contribution to the booklet to Ms. Lown by April 29th. He mentioned the Town Meeting Workshop on May 6th, from 7 – 8:30 p.m., sponsored by the Newcomers Club. This workshop is for those new to Westborough and explains how Town Meeting works—friends and neighbors should be encouraged to attend. He would like to have a post-town meeting review session, to discuss what went well, what didn't, and to get some feedback. Ms. Lown suggested including a blurb to that effect in the Message to Voters. Mr. Brown suggested that the Zoning Bylaw page be put in the brochure. Ms. Lown thought a chart explaining the zoning articles would be helpful. Mr. Harrington added that rather than having “for” or “against” microphones, people could go to either mike for comments or questions.

Deliberation and/or Voting ATM Warrant Articles

Deferred to the next meeting.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members.

Ms. Lown called the Committee's attention to the copy of the most recent House Ways and Means budget proposal. Mr. Malloy has produced an updated revenue expenditure estimate. The second page is the proposed funding by the Town Manager going forward.

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee minutes

April 15, 2010

Mr. Linnane explained that the alarm system upgrade was approved in 2006—then the engineer died. It is now going out to bid but the cost will be higher. The Committee will have an actual number closer to Town Meeting. The recommendation will be free cash. Mr. Johnson later clarified: in the 2006-7 fiscal year, the vote was for a \$120,000 upgrade of the sewer alarm. Additional money was from retained earnings, not free cash.

Ms. Casemyr told the Committee that we do not have a balanced budget, and that using free cash to fund day-to-day operation is a problem.

Ms. Lown will pull together the voting already completed, put in the updated budget, and add numbers.

Mr. Cronin will get copies of the final capital expense plan to the Committee.

Adjournment

Ms. Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.